Title: Need to allow the State Government to spend some amount from the Centrally sanctioned funds, on relief and rehabilition work.

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE (JORHAT): Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to raise the issue of floods after three days.

Assam has been reeling under floods for the last two months, that is, June and July. The present toll covers ten districts and 417 villages with 35,000 hectares of land, mostly under crop; and four lakh people affected. The biggest blow is the washing away of the railway bridge in Dhemaji, which has cut off the entire district from the rest of the country.

Sir, what worries us is the pattern and intensity of the current floods. It is such that going by the past experience, indications are very clear that this is going to continue and it will further deteriorate with more waves of flood coming.

Sir, a State like Assam weighed down by resource crunch is not in a position to handle the overall situation on its own. Besides relief and rehabilitation, it has become essential to take up some emergent protective work to minimise the devastation before more waves of flood hit. However, the Government of India, the Ministry of Agriculture by a circular issued last year and a recent Conference of Relief Commissioners, held, just two months ago, taking cue from the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission, has rejected the plea that the repairing of damaged infrastructure with the relief money will not be allowed. It passes me to understand the logic. To earmark some amount, for most essential protective work in the Centrally sanctioned fund for relief and rehabilitation, in no way violates the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission.On the other hand, this should be borne in mind that more devastation means more expenditure on relief and rehabilitation.

Sir, that is why, I request the Government of India to revise the opinion, to reformulate their decision on this matter and to allow the State Government at least to spend some amount from that fund, sanctioned for relief and rehabilitation.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (SILCHAR): Sir, I fully agree with him that the life line between upper Assam and Barak Valley has been washed away, about two kilometres because of excessive rains.

The attention of the Ministry of Railways has been drawn to take immediate action. It has created problems for Mizoram, Manipur, Agartala as well as Tripura.

Secondly, all the roads connecting from Haflong to Silchar, Silchar to Aizawl, which is under national highway, and border roads are also not accessible.

So, I request the Central Government to take appropriate steps.